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Occupational Employment and Wages in Houma–Thibodaux, May 2015

Workers in the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$21.69 in May 2015, about 7 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 16 of the 22 major occupational groups, including computer and mathematical; protective service; and education, training, and library. Only one local group, production, had wages that were measurably higher than the national average.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including transportation and material moving; construction and extraction; and installation, maintenance, and repair. Conversely, 16 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including computer and mathematical; office and administrative support; and business and financial operations. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Houma-Thibodaux		United States	Houma-Thibodaux	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾	
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%		\$23.23	\$21.69	*	-7
Management	5.0	3.9	*	55.30	47.94	*	-13
Business and financial operations	5.1	2.8	*	35.48	29.08	*	-18
Computer and mathematical	2.9	0.4	*	41.43	25.28	*	-39
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.0		39.89	37.58		-6
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5	*	34.24	28.24	*	-18
Community and social service	1.4	1.2	*	22.19	18.96	*	-15
Legal	0.8	0.2	*	49.74	40.01		-20
Education, training, and library	6.2	4.0	*	25.48	19.52	*	-23
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.4	*	27.39	19.26	*	-30
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	5.1	*	37.40	34.14	*	-9
Healthcare support	2.9	2.0	*	14.19	10.96	*	-23
Protective service	2.4	2.3		21.45	16.30	*	-24
Food preparation and serving related	9.1	7.9	*	10.98	10.36		-6
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	2.1	*	13.02	10.94	*	-16
Personal care and service	3.1	1.7	*	12.33	9.90	*	-20
Sales and related	10.5	9.4	*	18.90	15.58	*	-18
Office and administrative support	15.8	13.3	*	17.47	14.96	*	-14
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	(2)	*	12.67	14.11		11

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Houma-Thibodaux		United States	Houma-Thibodaux	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾	
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	7.8	*	22.88	21.06	*	-8
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	7.7	*	22.11	21.71		-2
Production	6.6	10.2	*	17.41	20.71	*	19
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	15.0	*	16.90	(3)		(3)

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Houma-Thibodaux is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

(2) Indicates a value of less than 0.05 percent.

(3) Estimates not released.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Houma had 9,850 jobs in production, accounting for 10.2 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.6-percent national share. More importantly, the local average hourly wage for this occupational group was \$20.71, nearly 20 percent above the national wage of \$17.41.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the production group included welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (2,210), inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (830), and machinists (790). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, as well as petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers, with mean hourly wages of \$30.31 and \$26.07, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were laundry and dry-cleaning workers (\$8.62) and bakers (\$10.25). (Detailed occupational data for production workers are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of all occupations see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_26380.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Houma metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers were employed at 15.3 times the national average in Houma and structural metal fabricators and fitters, at 8.2 times the U.S. rate. Both location quotients were among the highest in all metropolitan areas for these particular occupations. On the other hand, bakers had a location quotient of 0.9 in Houma, indicating that this occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

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Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The

unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,395 establishments with a response rate of 78 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes in Louisiana.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southwest. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	9,850	1.5	\$20.71	\$43,080
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	710	1.7	30.31	63,040
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	460	8.2	21.12	43,930
Team assemblers	340	0.4	18.37	38,210
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	(5)	(5)	12.48	25,970
Bakers	110	0.9	10.25	21,320
Butchers and meat cutters	90	0.9	12.59	26,180
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	(5)	(5)	8.36	17,380
Food processing workers, all other	50	1.4	9.75	20,280
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	110	1.1	17.73	36,880
Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	23.29	48,430
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	19.70	40,980
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	50	1.7	21.48	44,680
Machinists	790	2.8	21.59	44,910
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	2,210	8.2	22.41	46,620
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	19.94	41,470
Printing press operators	50	0.4	14.99	31,180
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	100	0.7	8.62	17,930
Sewing machine operators	40	0.4	10.08	20,970
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	100	1.2	15.97	33,220
Petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers	450	15.3	26.07	54,220
Plant and system operators, all other	240	29.3	18.05	37,550
Separating, filtering, clarifying, precipitating, and still machine setters, operators, and tenders	40	1.3	12.41	25,820
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	30	1.6	15.68	32,620
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	830	2.3	23.25	48,370
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	80	1.3	16.76	34,860
Painters, transportation equipment	(5)	(5)	24.46	50,880
Helpers-production workers	750	2.4	14.38	29,910
Production workers, all other	500	2.9	18.68	38,860

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Houma-Thibodaux MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_26380.htm.

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimates not released.